



Senior Nutrition Services Diabetes Fact Sheet

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of glucose (blood sugar) resulting from abnormal insulin action, insulin production, or both. Although diabetes is associated with serious complications and death, there are steps that people can take to control the disease and lower the risk of complications. Normal blood sugar levels are between 70 and 110mg/dl.

Types of Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is often referred to as insulin-dependant or juvenile-onset diabetes. This disease accounts for 5% to 10% of all new cases of diabetes and is usually diagnosed in children or young adults.

Type 2 diabetes or adult-onset diabetes accounts for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. This disease is characterized by a state of insulin resistance in which the body does not use insulin properly.

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes characterized by glucose intolerance in some women during pregnancy.

Pre diabetes occurs when blood glucose levels are higher than normal (Between 100 and 125mg/dl) but not high enough for a type 2 diagnosis.

Common Symptoms

- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst
- Extreme Hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Tingling or loss of feeling in the hands or feet
- Hypoglycemia: blood sugar levels below 70mg/dl
- Hyperglycemia: blood sugar level above 110mg/dl

Uncontrollable Risk Factors

- **Family History:** your risk would be higher if you had an immediate family member with diabetes.
- **Gestational Diabetes:** Women who have had a baby over nine pounds or who have had diabetes during pregnancy are at an increased risk.
- **Age:** Type 2 diabetes is more common in individuals over the age of 45.
- **Ethnic Groups:** Hispanics, Native Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans are at an increased risk of developing diabetes.

Controllable Risk Factors

- **Obesity:** Being overweight increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- **High Blood Pressure/Cholesterol:** Both of these conditions make you more susceptible to developing type 2 diabetes.
- **Lack of physical activity:** If you remain sedentary and do not use your muscles, glucose can build up to unhealthy levels in the blood.



Complication of Diabetes

Heart Disease and Stroke

- Heart disease is the leading cause of diabetes related deaths in the U.S. each year.
- The risk for stroke is about 4 times higher in people with diabetes.
- 65% of diabetes deaths in the U.S. each year are due to complications with heart disease and stroke.

High Blood Pressure

- About 73% of adults with diabetes have high blood pressure or hypertension.

Blindness

- Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness and accounts for 12,000 to 24,000 new cases of diabetic retinopathy each year.

Kidney Disease

- Diabetes accounts for 43% of all new cases of treated end stage renal disease.

Nervous System Disease

- About 70% of people with diabetes develop impaired sensations in their feet or hands, carpal tunnel syndrome, and slowed digestion of food.

Amputations

- 60% of lower-limb amputations performed each year in the U.S. are among individuals with diabetes.

Treatment of Diabetes

- Individuals with type 1 diabetes must have insulin administered by needle injections or by pumps in order to survive.
- Blood glucose levels in individuals with type 2 diabetes can be controlled through diet modifications and exercise.
- Diabetes self-management education is also a very important component in treating diabetes. Talk with your doctor about seeing a registered dietitian to assist you with menu planning.



The following organizations contributed to this fact sheet:

American Diabetes Association: <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>

American Association of Diabetes Educators: <http://www.aadenet.org>

Lucas Zanni, CSUS Dietetic Intern